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Veteran platoon sergeant says training is key to Soldiering

By Staff Sgt. Keith M. Anderson
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CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq — Sgt. 1st Class Poe Liufau, platoon sergeant, Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 146th Field Artillery, believes in the importance of training and leading Soldiers.

The 41-year-old native of Tacoma, Wash., has served in the Army since 1990, and has been an NCO since 1992, and is on his third deployment.

Liufau said being a good NCO is very simple.

“Be a Leader, lead and train your Soldiers, set the example and trust them, but also verify,” Liufau said.

Liufau said that it is important to stay engaged with your Soldier, even if that means giving up some free time.

“I had a Soldier who needed a lot of improvement in physical training and passing his APFT (Army physical fitness test),” Liufau said. “I took my personal time to coach him and assist him in areas where he need work.”

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In his free time Liufau said he likes to go camping with his wife Yvette, and their children, Queena, 21, Renae, 13, Eric, 11, and Matthew, 8.

Liufau said being a good NCO is more than barking orders.

“An NCO is a leader who leads by example and cares for his Soldiers, no matter what the circumstances may be,” Liufau said. “An NCO must provide purpose, direction, motivation and accomplish the mission, which involves coaching and mentoring.”

But Liufau said being a good Soldier is the same for everyone.

“Be a good follower, listen, learn and ask for guidance to better yourself,” he said. “Be a hard worker.”

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Sgt. 1st Class Poe Liufau, platoon sergeant, Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 146th Field Artillery, poses with his wife and four children. The 41-year-old native of Tacoma, Wash., has served in the Army since 1990, and has been an NCO since 1992, and is on his third deployment. (Courtesy photo)